

2002-2003



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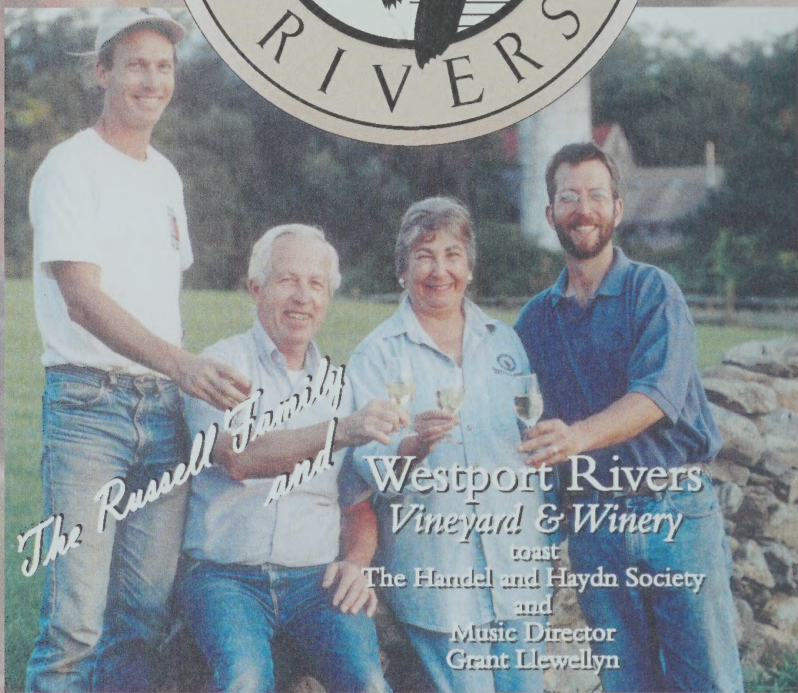
188TH SEASON



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Mendelssohn and Hogwood



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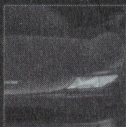
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Program

2002–2003 Season

Friday, March 14, 8.00pm

Sunday, March 16, 3.00pm

Symphony Hall, Boston

Christopher Hogwood, conductor

James Sommerville, horn

Overture from *Die schöne Melusine*, Op. 32

(*The Beautiful Melusine*) First version, 1834

Felix Mendelssohn

[1809–1847]

Symphony No. 4 in B-flat Major, Op. 20

Andantino – Allegro vivace e grazioso

Andante con moto

Scherzo – Allegro, ma non troppo e tranquillamente

Finale – Allegro molto vivace

Niels W. Gade

[1817–1890]

5

—INTERMISSION—

Concertino for Horn in E, Op. 45

James Sommerville, horn

Carl Maria von Weber

[1786–1826]

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90, "Italian"

Allegro vivace

Andante con moto

Menuetto – Con moto grazioso

Saltarello – Allegro di molto

Revised version, 1833/34

Mendelssohn

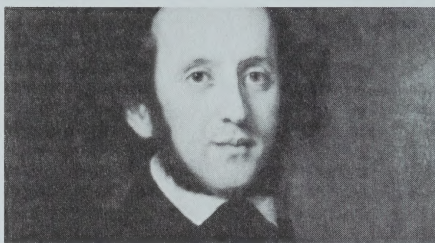
The program runs for approximately two hours.

The audience is respectfully asked to turn off all electronic watches, paging devices, and cellular phones during the performance.

Program Notes

Second Thoughts

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was a paradoxical mixture of a musical prodigy who composed with enormous facility, and a demanding self-critic who often rewrote his works. Two of the pieces on the program, the Overture to *Melusine* and the “Italian” Symphony were revised



Felix Mendelssohn

extensively. We will hear the first version of the overture, which has not received a public performance since 1834, and the later version of the symphony, which is rarely performed.

Both works were commissioned by the Philharmonic Society of London in 1832. In a letter to his sister Fanny, Felix wrote that he had composed the overture after attending a performance of the opera (*Melusine*) by Conradin Kreutzer, in 1833. He wrote:

[Kreutzer's] overture . . . which was encored displeased me marvelously, as did the whole opera. . . . [I] wanted to create an overture which people will not encore but that would be more inwardly felt.

While critics praised the work at its first performance which took place on April 7, 1834, the audience gave it a cool reception. Two accounts of rehearsals suggest that the public's lack of enthusiasm may have been due to shortcomings in the performance. In February 1834, Mendelssohn's friend Karl Klingemann reported to the composer:

[Ignaz] Moscheles conducts with his whole soul and all possible love. But the first time it went execrably—hard as a hurricane, the winds blasting without mercy, and the forte weak. The repetition was incomparably better.

THE MERMAID AND THE KNIGHT

The Overture to *Melusine* is based on a tale that resonated with many nineteenth-century German Romantics. The mermaid Melusine marries Knight Raimund on condition that he never seek her out on a Saturday. One day he breaks this rule, discovers that she is a mermaid, and loses her as she is obliged to return to the sea. Grillparzer's version of the tale ends with Raimund being united with Melusine in death.

The original French legend had been in print since the fifteenth century, and was also the basis of two other nineteenth-century operas called *Undine*, one by E. T. A. Hoffmann (1816), the other by Gustav Albert Lortzing (1845). The libretto set by Conradin Kreutzer was written by Franz Grillparzer had initially been offered to Beethoven, but was never set. Mendelssohn attended a performance of Kreutzer's *Melusine* at the Königstädter Theatre in Berlin in 1833, which prompted him to compose his overture.



Photograph of Niels W. Gade

After another rehearsal, Moscheles (the conductor) wrote Mendelssohn:

... it was not an easy matter to moderate the orchestra in the piano parts; ... the trumpets were somewhat surprised at having to fall in with their 7th on C. I winced and groaned and made them begin again three times. The contrasting storms went as if Neptune held the sceptre; but when the voices of the Sirens were to disarm the boisterous ruler, I had to call *piano, piano! piano!* at the top of my voice, bending down to the ground *à la* Beethoven, and in vain trying to restrain the ferocious violins and basses.

Although Mendelssohn feigned indifference to the public's tepid reception—and in letters he wrote in the summer of 1834, reported how much the overture pleased him—he had revised the piece before the next public performance (at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, on November 23, 1835). In mid-December, contradicting his earlier favorable assessment, he wrote Klingemann that the overture had always struck him as "half-finished," and requested that the Philharmonic's score of the earlier version be burned. We are fortunate that it was preserved—against his wishes.

Niels Gade was the most important Danish composer of the 19th century. When his First

Symphony was rejected for performance in Copenhagen, he sent it to Mendelssohn, who was impressed by it and presented it in 1843 with great success. A grant enabled Gade to go to Leipzig, where he joined the faculty of the Academy of Music and was named assistant conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra. Upon the death of Mendelssohn in 1847, he became its chief conductor, but returned to Copenhagen a year later. Gade's five-year stay in Leipzig, when he came into close contact with Mendelssohn and Schumann, exerted an enduring influence on his compositional style.

Although Mendelssohn feigned indifference to the public's tepid reception, he had revised the piece before the next public performance.

His fourth symphony was composed over the winter of 1849–50, and was performed by the Copenhagen Musical Society, conducted by the composer, in November 1850. It was the first of his eight symphonies to be premiered in Copenhagen rather than Leipzig. It was published in Leipzig in 1850.



Carl Maria von Weber (above) composed the first version of his Horn Concertino in 1806 for a virtuoso by the name of Dautrevaux when they both were employed at Carlsruhe. He revised the work for a player named Rauch in Munich in the summer of 1815, and it is in this version that it has come down to us. It is a show-piece for a virtuoso, and is constructed as a loosely-connected succession of sections: An Introduction in a lilting 6/8 meter; a Theme with Variations; a Cadenza in the form of a Recitative; and a Polacca. Towards the end of the Recitative that occurs midway through the piece, the horn player creates chords by simultaneously playing one note on the instrument and humming another. The revised version of the Concertino was published in Leipzig in 1818.

piece. He conducted the successful premiere in London in May 1833, but revised the last three movements the following year. Most of the changes involve details of instrumentation, melodic contour, and harmonies; the only movement that was substantially altered was the finale.

According to Mendelssohn, the symphony incorporates a broad range of impressions of the art, nature, and people he encountered in Italy. The opening theme of the first movement is highly exuberant. The slow movement alternates between a haunting, modal chant-like melody that is presented over a "running bass", and the contrasting, tonal, second subject. According to Moscheles, the chorale theme is based on a Czech pilgrim song. In the 1834 version, the chant melody is stripped of all ornamentation, which intensifies its stark, modal quality. The third movement is an old-fashioned minuet. The brilliant Neapolitan *Saltarello* finale, which was expanded from 264 to 305 measures in the 1834 version, is in the minor mode throughout. The earlier (1833) version of the symphony was published posthumously in 1851.

-Mary Greer

Musicologist and conductor Mary Greer is the Christopher Hogwood Research Fellow for the 2002–2003 season. A graduate of Yale and Harvard, she directs "Cantatas in Context," a Bach cantata series in New York City. Her dissertation on Bach's sacred duets is to be published by Scarecrow Press.

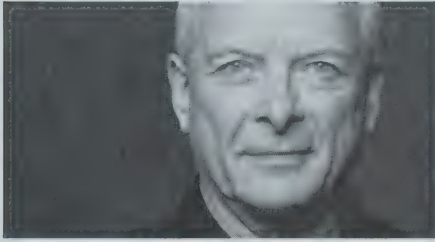
"The Italian Symphony is making good progress; it will be the jolliest piece I have ever done."

-Felix Mendelssohn, 1831

At Goethe's suggestion, **Mendelssohn** traveled to Italy in 1830–31, visiting Venice and Florence before continuing on to Rome. In February 1831, he wrote his family, "The Italian Symphony is making good progress; it will be the jolliest piece I have ever done." The following summer he returned to Berlin, where he completed the

Artist Profiles

Christopher Hogwood, conductor



Christopher Hogwood conducts repertoire ranging from the Baroque to contemporary, his readings sustained by a philosophy of revealing the composer's original sound-world. Since founding The Academy of Ancient Music in 1973, he has gained international recognition for his concert and recorded performances of Baroque and classical repertoire with period instruments. Since the 1960's, Mr. Hogwood has also been performing music of the twentieth century, with a particular affinity for the neo-Baroque and neo-classical schools, including works by Stravinsky, Martinů, and Tippett with

leading orchestras around the world. He is a spirited champion of neglected early Romantics, as his acclaimed cycle of Gade symphonies on CD proves. Today's program illustrates his insistence on the connection between the worlds of musicology and performance. This month Bärenreiter publishes *Die schöne Melusine*, the first of his critical edition of Mendelssohn's seven great concert overtures, for which he has unearthed the many revisions made by the composer himself and where he divulges how far all posthumous editions diverge from Mendelssohn's own intentions. Mr. Hogwood has fully absorbed contemporaneous accounts of how Mendelssohn's music should be performed and applies the instructions in this premiere of the new edition. In recognition of this alchemy that transforms the fruits of research in dusty archives into a gleaming aural experience. He has recently been made an Honorary Professor at the University of Cambridge.

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Handel and Haydn Society

Under the leadership of music director Grant Llewellyn and conductor laureate Christopher Hogwood, the Society is a leader in historically informed performance, specializing in music for chorus and period orchestra from the Baroque and Classical eras. Each Handel and Haydn concert is distinguished by the use of instruments, techniques, and performance styles typical of the period in which the music was composed. Now in its 188th season, the Society has a long tradition of musical excellence. In the nineteenth century, Handel and Haydn gave the American premieres of Handel's *Messiah* (1818), which the Society has performed

every year since 1854, Haydn's *The Creation* (1819), Verdi's *Requiem* (1878) and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (1889). Recent seasons have included collaborations with prominent jazz artists, a series of semi-staged operas, weekend-long festivals, and world and American premieres. The Society's ambitious Educational Outreach Program brings the joy of classical music to more than 10,000 students each year in over 50 public schools throughout Massachusetts. Handel and Haydn received a 2003 Grammy Award for its recording of Sir John Tavener's *Lamentations and Praises*.

James Sommerville, horn



James Sommerville has won great acclaim for his solo appearances through North America and Europe. As an orchestral musician, he has toured and recorded extensively with such ensembles as the Montreal Symphony, Toronto Symphony, and Symphony Nova Scotia. He has served as principal horn of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1998 and is also a member of the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Mr. Sommerville has recorded chamber music for

Deutsche Gramophon, Telarc, CBC, Summit, and Marquis, and his recording of the Mozart horn concertos with the CBC Vancouver Orchestra won the 1998 JUNO Award for Best Classical Recording in Canada. He has performed as guest artist and faculty member at many chamber music festivals, including the Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, Scotia Festival, Festival of Sound, Domaine Forget, and the Banff International Festival of the Arts. Mr. Sommerville also devotes his talents to the performance of early music on period instruments, and has commissioned many new works. He teaches at the New England Conservatory and at Boston University. These performances mark Mr. Sommerville's debut with the Handel and Haydn Society.

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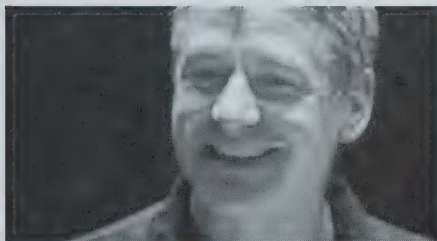
John Grimes

2003-2004 Season

An Interview with Grant Llewellyn

Music Director Grant Llewellyn offers a behind-the-scenes look at what's in store next season.

2003-2004: THE ITALIAN SEASON



Grant Llewellyn

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QUESTION: Why an "Italian Season?"

GL: I've spent a great deal of time in Italy, as a student and on holiday. I'm drawn to the Italian people—their warmth, color, humor, and temperament. It's this spirit that I hear and feel in Italian choral and instrumental music.

Q: The season opens with the first fully staged production of Monteverdi's Vespers 1610. What will that be like?

GL: In addition to our orchestra and singers, there will be a troupe of Asian dancers - all female - from Korea, China, Indonesia, Bali and Japan. The stage director Chen Shi-Zheng is from China but has worked for the past ten years producing opera in North America and Europe. He'll bring a uniquely Asian perspective to this love song to the Virgin Mary.

Q: What's the scenario?

GL: The Virgin Mary is a revered figure in Eastern cultures. The dancers will use Asian movement and gestures to convey these sentiments.

Q: Tell us about the Roman Holiday program featuring music Handel wrote in Italy.

GL: Handel was intoxicated by the new sights and sounds he experienced during his three-year stay in Rome. It was a very exciting time for him, and it produced some of his most inspired and beautiful music. Many works from that time—like the *Dixit Dominus*—have a terrific rhythmic drive and bright tonalities. The sheer virtuosity that's required of the chorus is extraordinary.



Grant Llewellyn leads the Chorus this past December

Q: For the Baroque Love Duets, why did you choose Sanford Sylvan and Christine Brandes?

GL: When Sandy and Chris sing you're hearing the Rolls Royce's of the vocal world. They are keenly aware of the musical aesthetic and the style of the Baroque period. To have them on our season is something really special.

GL: There's absolutely no difference. Our singers work especially well with period instruments yet also possess a warmth and richness, that I think especially suites Symphony Hall and music by Verdi. What's key is that the voices blend beautifully together.

Q: The Devil's Trill program features instrumental music written during the Italian Baroque? What was the role of the violin maker?

GL: The instruments built in that period—those by Amati or Stradivari—sounded so fantastic that players worked harder and harder to play faster, higher, louder, and softer. Many of the players were composers, like Vivaldi and Tartini. Some of them became travelling superstars of the day, and wrote brilliant display pieces for themselves.

I look forward to coming to Boston to perform with our instrumentalists and singers more than I do anywhere else.

Q: Tell us about the Vivaldi and Verdi program. What's the thread?

The Verdi pieces are centrally inspired by a devotion to the Virgin Mary and the Vivaldi works are also religious. The Verdi pieces are unaccompanied and require a sort of purity and classicism that I think is entirely in keeping with the sacred aesthetic of Vivaldi's Gloria's.

Q: You've been Music Director for almost two years? Any thoughts or impressions?

GL: I have to say that I look forward to coming to Boston to perform with our instrumentalists and singers more than I do anywhere else. There's a freshness and willingness to work hard and get it right. But beyond getting it right, there is a thrill about performing that I find particularly exciting.

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Q: Our chorus usually sings Baroque and classical repertoire. What is it like for them to make the leap to Verdi?

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Sunday, Apr 13, 3pm

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
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